

## NURSE PRACTITIONER SHINES LIGHT FOR WORRIED PATIENTS

### KAREN VASSELL-CAMPBELL

NURSE PRACTITIONER,  
NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS/GOTHAM HEALTH, MORRISANIA

**My Role:** I'm a Nurse Practitioner, and I usually work in Bronx schools as part of the services offered through Gotham Health, Morrisania. With schools closed, I now work in the facility with adults as well. It's a giant leap in care, but it's not a leap in the wrong direction. As a nurse, you serve humanity, which means covering everyone from birth to death. I'm honored to be in this role at this time.

I screen patients and employees in the lobby and in tents to make sure they don't have a fever. If they do, we triage them. We ask them about symptoms, and who they've contacted. I also now call patients to provide results to their COVID-19 tests, and I educate them on what to do whether they are positive or negative.

I hear from patients who tell me that they may have symptoms. They're scared, worried and their minds are blurred. It's my role to educate them. I tell them that if they can't reach their provider outside, come here. I'm their navigator, a voice, that light that shows patients and their family what they can do. The doors are open.

**Impact of COVID-19:** My role as an educator is significantly enhanced. I'm constantly talking to patients and guiding them with a goal to promote, restore health and prevent illness. I'm reaching out to my students and their parents to tell them that it's safe to come. Some have visited with their parents, including one student who was diagnosed with latent tuberculosis. He and his father, a single parent, recently migrated to New York. We have language barriers, but we can still communicate. He came in, and when I saw him, he smiled. It made me realize that we are still doing good. This will all be over one day, and we will celebrate.

**Why I'm on the frontlines:** I pledged before God and man that I would do this profession and do so

faithfully. I will do whatever it takes to uphold health and humanity. Those are things that are endowed on you as a nurse, and they always come to the front especially in the face of Coronavirus. The world has seen many viruses before it, though none like this. Still, we will triumph.

**Managing stress:** My family and my faith in God keeps me going. I read Psalms 91 every day, and go for walks in the park while maintaining social distancing. Depending on how I feel, I sing.

I also take the time to grieve for people who have lost their life. I'm not waiting until the end of the pandemic to work through my grief, because it's too much. There isn't a time that I don't feel what is happening, because I'm human. So, I offer condolences. I feel sorrow. But, I know this too shall pass. We are strong.

